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PROGRAM

THIRTY-THIRD REPORT
OF THE
PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

S. Res. 18

(82d Congress)

REPORT ON
ADMINISTRATIVE TOP-HEAVINESS OF OUR ARMED FORCES



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INTERIM REPORT ADMINISTRATIVE TOP-HEAVINESS OF OUR ARMED FORCES

One of the more alarming trends in military organization during the past few years has been the increasing administrative top-heaviness of our Armed Forces. Each member of the committee has been concerned about and wants to correct this condition.

In its most obvious form, this trend has manifested itself by a heavy concentration of high-ranking officers in Washington, D. C. But it is also evident in the huge number of civilians now working for the Defense Department in the Washington area.

The high concentration of "upper brass" is apparent to the most casual observer of the Washington scene. Even a noonday stroller down any street in the midsection of the city is likely to encounter at least a few officers of general or "flag" rank.

Members of Congress have the situation called to their attention much more forcibly—in fact, it is literally thrust upon them.

It is rare that a congressional committee meets upon any subject affecting the armed services without finding the hearing room jammed with high-ranking officers and Defense Department civilian officials.

At a recent meeting of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee, 14 assorted officials from one defense agency appeared to testify. Their ranks ranged from lieutenant colonel to four-star general and from civilian technician to secretary.

As most of these officials contributed nothing to the hearing, it was difficult to escape the impression of a woeful and unnecessary waste of manpower.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the chairman of the subcommittee admonished the secretary in question that similar episodes should be avoided in the future. He stated that two informed officials would have been sufficient for the purposes of the committee—one to discuss policy matters and the other to discuss technical details.

The others, he added, should be put to some better use.

The chairman requested that his remarks be brought to the attention of the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. He later directed the subcommittee staff to obtain and study exact figures on the number of general and flag officers and the number of Defense Department civilian employees in the Washington, D. C., area.

The results of the study were astonishing. They disclosed that the United States is operating a military machine of less than 3,500,000 men with nearly the same number of generals, admirals, and civilian employees in Washington that it had on VE-day when the total number of men in uniform was well over 12,000,000.

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The figures speak for themselves:

	Apr. 30, 1945 (near VE-day)	Sept. 30, 1951
General and flag officers in Washington area: ¹		
Army		1139
Air Force	2 279	1 98
Navy	103	109
Marine Corps	15	15
Total	397	361
Defense Department civilian employees in Washington area: ¹		
Secretary of Defense activities ²		2,148
Army		38,057
Air Force	2 51,202	8,345
Navy and Marine Corps	46,869	42,531
Total	98,071	91,081

¹ The Washington area consists of the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland, Alexandria City, and Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia.

² War Department, which included both Army and Air Force.

³ This was prior to the Unification Act which created the office of Secretary of Defense.

On the face of it, there can be no justification for these figures.

And in appraising these figures, it should be remembered that on the 30th of April 1945, the United States possessed the largest fighting force in its history and the most powerful military machine in the history of the world. It had just concluded the defeat of the Axis Powers in Europe and was readying itself for the final blow against the Japanese Empire.

The subcommittee recognizes the fact that war has now become much more complex than in the past and that new types of organization are undoubtedly required to meet the needs of our armed services. But it can hardly be argued that we need nearly the same number of admirals, generals, and civilian employees in Washington for 3½ million uniformed men that we needed for 12 million.

These figures give rise to some disturbing thoughts. The Armed Forces of the United States that defeated the Axis Powers were approximately 3½ times the size of our present combined Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. It is entirely possible that in a major war we would return to that strength.

On that basis, would we have to multiply our present staffs of generals and admirals in Washington by 3½? Would we have to staff the Pentagon with 1,256 general and flag officers? Would we have to jam 321,695 civilian employees into the Defense Department buildings in the Capital area?

There is no need to belabor this point. It is obvious that the Defense Establishment is tending toward an administrative top-heaviness that is inefficient, wasteful, and dangerous. Unless the trend is halted now we could, in the classic phrase, wind up with the fighting forces composed of "all chiefs and no Indians."

The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee plans to continue its study of the conditions outlined in this interim report. It is to be hoped that time will not be wasted on excuses to justify the situation outlined above, but that a real attempt to eliminate wasteful and extravagant use of personnel will be made.

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RECOMMENDATION

The subcommittee recommends that the Secretary of Defense conduct a thorough review of the number of general and flag officers and Defense Department civilian personnel in the Washington area with a view to determining whether their numbers could be reduced by more efficient utilization, with a report of such review made to the subcommittee upon its completion.

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LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
November 13, 1951.

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: There is submitted herewith a report of the Preparedness Subcommittee which was appointed by you under authority of Senate Resolution 18 of the Eighty-second Congress. This is an interim report on the top-heaviness of our Armed Services.

The subcommittee also has under way numerous other studies. The results of these studies will be reported to you as they are completed.

Respectfully,

LYNDON B. JOHNSON,
Chairman, Preparedness Subcommittee.

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